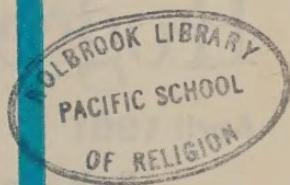


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Social Progress



Conflict Within Community

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BY WAY

OF

INTRODUCTION



THIS issue of SOCIAL PROGRESS deals with "conflict"—the collision of strongly held opinions, convictions, biases. Disagreements are not uncommon in our churches, and sometimes they have to do with "controversial" social issues.

Our approach to the subject of controversy-and-what-to-do-about-it is based on several assumptions:

1. That conflict as defined above is inevitable wherever human beings, especially Christians, gather together. It stems partly from the universality of human difference;
2. That conflict can be either creative or destructive, and need not necessarily be the latter;
3. That there is a prevailing climate in the church that regards conflict (or controversy) as so dangerous to the survival of the church that it is usually repressed or glossed over as though it did not exist;
4. That avoiding verbal conflict is in the long run more dangerous than permitting, or even encouraging, the expression of conflicting opinions, responsibly dealt with;
5. That where there is no expression of differing and conflicting points of view about important issues, no growth takes place and stagnation sets in (the most peaceful place in the world, in terms of the absence of conflict, is a graveyard);
6. That a rebirth of responsible controversy over important issues in the church would be a sign of health; and
7. That with an elementary understanding of conflict, a knowledge of the nature of the church, and some appreciation for methods of dealing with conflict, skills can be developed in church leaders to help make conflict creative and life-giving—something to be welcomed rather than feared.

There is considerable evidence that the attitude that deplores and fears conflict is derived from one's social class orientation rather than from Scripture or the Christian faith. Theologically speaking, the fellowship of the church, more than any other group, ought to be a context within which conflict can be resolved and reconciliation take place. And if the church fellowship were dominated by its Biblical and theological heritage rather than by its sociological environment, no issue of SOCIAL PROGRESS would need to deal with the nature of conflict and methods for managing it creatively. But the Bible calls upon us to be at the very least realistic in recognizing the real facts of our situation. There undoubtedly are congregations or groups of Christians that approximate a twentieth-century version of the New Testament fellowship, but honesty compels us to recognize that these are not typical. In too many of our churches, the values that most influence our procedures and our decisions are derived from the social class within which the majority of the members feel "at home." And for most of us this means that verbally expressed conflict of opinion is regarded with distaste and avoided or deferred if possible.

It was not so among the people of God as they are spoken of in the Bible. "The body of Christ" as Paul called it was not made up of people from the same economic stratum (see James 2: 1-4) or the same race (see Acts 8: 27; 13: 1) or the same culture (see Acts 2: 5-42). Conflict and controversy were normal for the church (see, for example, Acts 15: 2 ff. and Gal., ch. 2, especially vs. 11 ff.).

The heroes of the Bible probably could not qualify as "gentlemen" in today's middle-class American society. There is little Biblical evidence that they modulated their voices, restrained the verbal expression of their passions, tried to avoid giving offense, or were concerned about observing the niceties of social intercourse. New Testament leaders, having known God's forgiveness in Jesus Christ, were able to forgive the offenses of their brothers in Christ. Reconciliation could take place within a community of reconciliation, not by the avoidance of verbally expressed conflict, but precisely because such conflict made reconciliation necessary. But where estrangement goes unrecognized because conflict is repressed no real reconciliation is possible. The church becomes a club of superficial congeniality rather than a living, dynamic, *koinōnia* in which grace and reconciliation are a way of life necessitated by real, recognized, and expressed collisions of attitudes.

What binds persons together in the church as it is described in the New Testament is the fact that *they acknowledge Jesus Christ as Lord*. This means that Republicans and Democrats, homeowners and realtors, renters and landlords, employers and employees (to cite only a few contending groups) should be more securely bound together as Christians than divided by conflicting vested interests. Loyalty to Jesus Christ ought to be for Christians dominant over subloyalties to party, class, race.

It may not be unless these Christians are reminded from time to time of *whose they are*, of whose grace they are all beneficiaries, of what it is that, Biblically speaking, brings them together into the church of Jesus Christ.

At the same time, it is probably unrealistic to expect that such a simple reminder will wipe out the "nontheological" loyalties that Christians have. **But it is of crucial importance that Christians be helped to perceive, to be aware of, to recognize in themselves the existence and the force of these "nontheological" loyalties.** It is of little value to remind a man that his primary loyalty ought to be, with other Christians, to Jesus Christ rather than to his racial fears, for example, if he is not *aware* that he has any racial fears, or believes them to be objectively valid.

If fish could talk, they would probably have no word for water. American Christians need to be helped to become aware of the "cultural sea" in which they live during every waking moment—and of the subtle but powerful ways in which their attitudes are conditioned by the currents that flow in that "cultural sea." It is probably of no profound theological significance that while *escargots* are regarded as a delicacy in France snails are nauseating to most people in America. But the culturally derived preferences and prejudices that injure human beings *are* of profound theological significance. Christians may not be able to get rid of them simply by knowing from whence they got them, but such knowledge may enable Christians to deal with them a bit more objectively and to make allowances for them in resolving conflict caused by them.

Finally, Christians more than anyone else ought to be distrustful of the ultimate validity of human wisdom, including their own (after all, it was the judgment of good and devout men that put Jesus on a cross between two thieves, being unable to distinguish any practical difference between the God-man and the outlaws). All of us, and all of our opinions—even our most cherished convictions—are subject to God's judgment and grace which may well come to us *through* the expressed contradictory point of view of others within and outside the church. As a matter of fact, the editors of SOCIAL PROGRESS remind themselves, and are frequently reminded by their readers, of the truth of this observation.

—*The Staff*

TIGERS, TIGERISM, AND THE SESSION

A Case in Point

IT IS widely believed that opinions and attitudes about a particular subject are determined by the amount of "knowledge" one has about the subject. Therefore what could be more logical than to assume that when people express diverse or conflicting opinions about the same subject they are merely speaking from different collections of data or facts.

As Wendell Johnson suggests, this explanation of human disagreement is enshrined in the famous fable about the six blind men who encountered an elephant and came up with six different conclusions about what it was they had encountered—because each one had examined a different part of the beast.

This parable has an innocent fraud built into it and has probably misled millions of children. The fraud hinges upon the detail that the six men are blind and the implication that if they had been able to see, they would have agreed perfectly about elephants.

Johnson suggests that a good antidote to the fable of the blind men and the elephant is a more realistic folk tale known as "The Emperor's New Clothes." This is a story about the tailors who applied elementary

psychology to produce a gorgeous invisible garment so fine that it could be seen only by the pure in heart and which they sold to the emperor at a fabulous price. The emperor wore this unique garment with innocent pride to the cheers of admiration from all his platonic and romantic subjects—all except one small child who did not possess the vision to see what was not there and who could not be convinced that the emperor was anything other than naked. (This insight into the nature of the two stories is derived from a paper by Wendell Johnson, "The Six Men and the Stuttering," which appeared in the Summer, 1959, edition of *ETC.*, the journal of the International Society for General Semantics.)

Let the reader now imagine a church session that has become disturbed by disquieting rumors going about the church. Person after person has come to the minister and the session saying in effect: "Have you heard that tigerism is rampant in this community and poses a grave threat to our church? Why doesn't the session do something about this menace?"

Some members of the session con-

firm the fact that they also had heard these rumors although few of them have ever encountered a real tiger. But the peace and unity of the church appears to be so disrupted by the rumors that the session agrees that there must be "something behind it all."

A committee of three responsible elders is therefore appointed to engage in a thorough study of tigerism and to bring back its report with recommendations at the next meeting a month hence.

The committee is responsible, intelligent, and thorough. It meets three times a week for four weeks. It reads all the information it can lay its hands on. It calls in outside experts as consultants. Although the members of the committee in the beginning find themselves in disagreement, if not real conflict, after twelve intensive meetings of thorough study and discussion, they become of one mind. In due time they bring their report to the next meeting of the session. Their report is as follows:

"*'Tigerism' is a term applied to the way of life, and all that goes with it, of a large Asiatic carnivorous mammal (*Felis tigris*) of the cat family, of tawny color transversely striped with black. The long untufted tail is ringed with black and the under parts are mostly white. The tiger has no mane. It slightly exceeds the lion in measurements, its total length being ordinarily nine to ten feet, but sometimes more than twelve feet. Though able to climb trees, it does not habitually do so. In many districts it lives largely on cattle and often takes to man eating. The tiger ranges from Persia across Asia to the Malaya Peninsula, Sumatra, and*

Java, and northward to southern Siberia. Northern specimens have much longer and softer hair than the southern ones, and are often regarded as a different species or subspecies.

"The term 'tiger' is also sometimes used for certain other animals, as in Spanish America, the jaguar; in South Africa, the leopard; and in Tasmania, the thylacine. The term 'tigerism' should be applied to the way of life of these latter animals only with great care, since they in fact vary considerably from each other, depending upon habitat and circumstance. (The physical description of the tiger and his habitat is taken almost verbatim from the Second Edition of *Webster's New International Dictionary, Unabridged*.)

"*Although your committee was able actually to see a real live tiger and can report that he has indeed a fearsome roar and a tremendous appetite for raw meat, it must add that it would hesitate to generalize about tigers or tigerism solely from its contact with this one beast. In the first place, the animal seen by the committee was at the local zoo, behind bars, and was born in this country rather than abroad. It must therefore be referred to as a second generation tiger and not a true example of the *Felis tigris*.*

"*After long and careful study and deliberation, your committee must report that it does not perceive any immediate, objective threat to this congregation either from tigerism or from tigers themselves, although we would counsel parents to keep small children off the streets after dark. Although there is only a remote pos-*

sibility that these children might actually encounter a tiger, it is probably a good idea for them to be home after nightfall anyway.

"However, your committee is well aware of the documented facts that tigers do constitute a very real menace to life and property in some areas overseas. Without a doubt, tigers and tigerism constitute a real menace in the world and ought to be taken seriously by all Christians and Americans who profess to care anything at all about their fellow men.

"Further, this congregation appears to be somewhat disrupted in its peace, unity, and purity, so that while no immediate, objective danger is visible nevertheless we believe certain steps should be taken to remove the very real danger of internal, subjective trouble in our fellowship.

"Your committee therefore recommends:

"1. That a thorough and co-ordinated educational program be instituted immediately in this church so that not only the children but also the adults may be thoroughly acquainted with tigers and tigerism in order that they may be able to recognize them when they encounter them, and take appropriate steps to defend our way of life should tigerism become a serious, objective menace in the community;

"2. That certain members of the congregation be well trained in the handling of firearms, and instructed to shoot on sight any tigers that may be found roaming around in our community or our church;

"3. That persons in the church spreading rumors about the presence

of tigerism in our community be asked to document their assertions so that appropriate measures may be taken to stamp out this alleged menace; and lacking such documentation, that these persons be requested by the session to stop spreading undocumented and unfounded rumors that seriously threaten the peace and unity of this church;

"4. That the committee be dismissed upon the adoption of this report by the session."

The reaction within the session is immediate and vigorous, and the moderator has difficulty in maintaining order.

Mrs. A, as a child, lived in India and saw her missionary father devoured by a tiger.

Mr. B has already responded to the rumors of the menace of tigerism in the community and has formed a Committee to Stamp Out Tigerism. He has been elected its president, has raised \$400 for its budget, secured an office for its headquarters, and hired a staff person to carry out its program.

Mr. C, as a child, had a baby tiger as a pet and grew to love it dearly but was eventually forced to give it to a zoo when it became too large for the house and could not be trusted alone with the dog.

Six other members of the session begin the discussion with no deep convictions about tigers but gradually are swayed one way or the other by the arguments. Three are sympathetic with the committee report, two join forces with the anti-tiger faction, and one is too confused by the argument to reach a conclusion.

The moderator does his best
to "moderate" the discussion, which
goes something like this (greatly
condensed):

Mrs. A: Tigers are the most vicious creatures in the world. The only good tiger is a dead tiger. You don't know what it's like to live in the midst of tigerism. My father was one of the kindest and most gentle persons I ever knew, and his life was cut off while he was still a young man with a brilliant career ahead of him because he happened to get in the way of a charging tiger. I think this committee is soft on tigerism. Their report is nothing more than a whitewash, if not actually pro-tigerism. Mr. Moderator, I move . . .

Moderator: Now wait, let's hear from some other members of the session.

Mr. C: I think we ought not to get excited about this thing. While I can agree that tigerism could be a real menace in our community, I must say that one of my best friends was a tiger, and as an individual I would not want to know a more lovable beast. Of course, as he grew older we had to watch him and found it necessary to get rid of him, but this is no reason for us to go off half-cocked against the whole tiger race. I take issue with Mrs. A, who obviously does not know tigers as I do.

Mr. B (as Mrs. A is desperately trying to be recognized by the Moderator): I agree completely with Mrs. A (*shouting*). You men don't realize what we are getting into. If you give these beasts an inch, they will take a mile. You know what happens once you let the camel's nose inside the tent. Although many of us

have never seen an actual tiger, every intelligent person in our midst knows that tigerism has already reached its deadly tenacles into the remotest jungles of the Far East as well as into some of the populated cities. Its poison is seeping through the world and sooner or later will engulf us all. The program recommended by the committee is obviously totally inadequate, to put the most charitable interpretation on it, and actually will result in the strengthening of the menace of tigerism in the long run. Now let me tell you about my organization . . .

Moderator: Just a moment, Mr. B, let's hear from Mrs. D as a mother.

Mrs. D: Well, I must say, I never realized before that tigerism was so dangerous. I didn't know that tigers actually killed people, and it seems to me that anything that would actually kill a human being is too dangerous to let roam around our streets. I think we should take the most vigorous measures possible to make our city and our church safe. While it may be true that many of us have never actually seen a tiger, even the remotest possibility that my child's life might be endangered is enough to make me, as it would any normal mother, willing to undergo any sacrifice to protect him. Nothing is too good for our children.

Mr. E: I agree with Mrs. D . . . I think.

Mr. F: Shouldn't we calm down a bit and try to think this thing through a bit more calmly? We've heard a factual report from our committee with four specific recommendations, and we haven't really discussed the report or the

recommendations. If I may, Mr. Moderator, I'd like to speak to the first one, the educational program . . .

Mr. B: My organization will be happy to come in and show a film that will explain the whole menace to our congregation . . .

Mr. G: Mr. Moderator, what do you think?

Moderator: Well, I . . .

Mr. H: I move we table the whole thing until we have had time to think about it and sleep on it and can discuss it a little more . . . ah . . . objectively . . . ah . . . you know what I mean . . .

Moderator: I'll entertain a motion to adjourn, and hope that we may all return next week, etc.

Wha' Happened? ... with the Tigers?

After the session adjourned, the moderator shook himself, wiped the perspiration from his brow, waited for the dust to settle, and sat down to reflect on what had happened . . . what did the wisdom of hindsight suggest should have been done?

1. The moderator had a tiger by the tail, and realized it, but too late for his knowledge to do more than increase his sense of helplessness and desperation. Next time he would try to anticipate conflict.

2. He might have salvaged something from the debacle if he had worked with some members of the session and the committee ahead of time to prepare them for the conflict. Perhaps a lay person (Mr. C?) could have moderated the meeting, permitting the moderator to play a different role, and changing the role of the lay person.

3. Ground rules for the discussion should have been laid down before the committee made its report. After the conclusion of the report a few orienting remarks about the nature and purpose of the meeting, the theological context within which judgments are made and expressed by Christians, and the need for all the participants to try to recognize their prior commitments should have been made.

4. During the discussion "facts, inferences, value judgments, and purposeful communiqués" (see page 29) were frequently expressed as though they were all of a piece with one another. It might have been helpful if someone had pointed out the differences between them and helped the participants to discern which was which.

5. The moderator learned—and might so indicate at a future date to the others—that education and information about a subject do not necessarily bring about any profound change in attitude or behavior. Neither Mrs. A, whose father was eaten by a tiger, nor Mr. B, who had a vested interest in anti-tigerism, was deeply influenced by the facts brought in by the committee,

partly because neither could transcend his emotional involvement sufficiently to recognize that he was speaking out of that involvement. Other members of the session may also have been unaware of the extent to which these two were dominated by their prior experiences and present commitments.

6. Mrs. D (the mother) was reacting viscerally to *words*, which she identified with external realities. What was happening inside her own skin was not commensurate with the objective possibilities for her own children "out there" in the real world. (The word "cancer," which as a verbal symbol has no objective power at all, can produce similar reactions. The *word* is not the *thing*, but the word is sometimes regarded and reacted to as though it *were* the *thing*.) The committee report made a very valid distinction between the *objective* danger of tigers and tigerism to the congregation (practically nil) and the *subjective* danger of emotional reaction to rumor and fear (very real). It might not have helped much, but it would have been worth a try for someone on the session to have pointed out this distinction.

7. Someone should have asked the most vocal dissenters to stop shouting long enough to try to restate to the satisfaction of their opponents the points with which they were taking issue. If Mrs. A had been able to articulate the points in the committee report which she believed indicated they were "soft on tigerism," she might have been able to calm down a bit and propose alternatives. Mr. C, who disagreed with Mrs. A, also could have been asked to state to her satisfaction the assertions she made with which he took issue.

8. The moderator learned many things about the session in this meeting. Courtesy, compassion, and forgiveness were either not present or else not operative when an emotional nerve was touched. Some understanding of the rudimentary meaning of *koinōnia* needs to be achieved by this session.

9. The conclusion of the meeting was probably the best that could have been expected under the circumstances. However, a two weeks' trial period of one or more of the committee's recommendations might have been proposed. Another possibility might have been that the two who took most violent exception to the committee report be asked to meet with the committee over a period of time to go over its data and discuss it in another setting less charged with emotion.

10. Prior to the next meeting, the moderator will mail to every session member a copy of this issue of SOCIAL PROGRESS. That should solve *everything!*

Dealing with CONTROVERSY

PEACE, unity, and purity" in the church are not the same as congeniality. If God alone is Lord of the conscience, and if being in Christ can permit Christians, while retaining their self-interest, to rise above it, then healthy, expressed conflict can actually enhance the peace, unity, and purity of the church. It can make reconciliation an experience, as well as a doctrine, in the life of the church.

Our polity affirms the right of dissent and provides for this orderly expression. Yet there is often more freedom of speech, thought, and conscience in the legislative halls of Congress than in the session room of a congregation.

Controversy Has Many Causes

Disagreements arise in churches from many sources. Church members are individuals with differing physical and mental characteristics, tastes, temperaments, prejudices, education, experience, hopes, and limitations. Some disagreements rise out of human pride and error. We make mistakes and injure and outrage others in defending our mistakes. Some of our failures are as hard for others to forgive as they are for us to admit to ourselves. Our biases stick out. Our

interests clash. We respond differently to situations and problems.

Our actions even in the church are usually tinged with self-interest.

Some controversies arise over policy. Others arise over method. Frequently, not issues but personalities are involved. And all of this is to say that some differences, disagreements, and controversies are normal and to be expected wherever human beings are together. Christians are not called upon to be less human but more human.

Because churches rarely venture out of the middle of the road, controversy and disagreement are not usually provoked by great social questions. Disagreements over budgets, choirs, or who uses the church building frequently pre-empt debate, decision, and action on the great issues of our time.

The Leader's Reaction

But whatever the point at issue, the designated leader's own attitude toward conflict and controversy is half the battle and usually sets the scene for either a showdown or some constructive resolution. Controversy can erupt and disrupt if church leaders:

- Are afraid of it and force dif-

ferences to go underground. "We are not going to let anything disturb our happy fellowship."

- Gloss over disagreements and whitewash them. "Let's look only at the things we can agree on."
- Pretend there is no controversy and hope that "it will go away if nobody pays attention to it."
- Postpone indefinitely attempts to face the issue until the time is more auspicious. Timing is important, but delay can be a factor in building resentment. "We need a cooling-off period" is subject to question if its purpose is to bury disagreement.
- Accept conflict as an inevitable evil. "Nothing can be done about it. You can't please everybody."
- Dictate the weapons as well as the terms of the armistice. "We will get this settled if we have to knock heads together!"

None of these negative approaches and precautions will be likely to improve attitudes or situations. Suppression tends to drive hostile feelings underground where they fester and seriously undermine the morale of a group and its members. The avoidance of controversy makes a group go stale and vapid and robs the church of its prophetic response to the events of our time and to God's mighty acts within them.

Controversy can be a creative and reconciling force in the Christian community if church leaders:

- Admit that differences exist and face them honestly without being flummoxed or fearful. "Not

all of us agree on this, and that is to be expected."

- Appreciate and respect the ideas and opinions of others. "Each of us has something to say that may help the rest of us reach a better understanding of what is at stake and what we should decide to do. No Christian has the right to be contemptuous of the mind of another."
- Understand the contending forces that inevitably arise in groups as people react and interact with one another. "We cannot go along as some want to do. Some new issues have to be fought for."
- Recognize the powerful forces that push people to harmonize their differences and conform. "We know it is a temptation to declare the question settled and stop arguing, but do we have the right to sign off?"
- Develop the capacity to absorb hostility directed by group members toward other members. "I'll be a lightning rod for your understandable resentment."
- Try to seek the truth of the matter rather than to bury the opposition or win the arguments. "We are looking at all possible sides and solutions in order to see what is the truth."
- Work to reach decisions that are the result of openness and free discussion. "The people who are affected by our decision ought to have their say."

Leaders who understand these creative and fruitful values of con-

troversy will not be alarmed at the idea that the church must take responsibility for raising issues and possibly precipitating controversy especially when people are apathetic or unaware.

The Group Meets Conflict

In a group that is dealing with a controversial issue or handling a conflict that has arisen among the members, the designated leader has specific roles and functions that will help the group to meet the conflict in a constructive and creative way. In the process there should be increased understanding of the issue, the nature of the controversy, and of the feelings and viewpoints of the people involved in it, as well as some agreement about approaching or acting on the issue. Most important, the persons who deal with the issue ought to be aware of a new relationship to one another and to Christ within the redeeming, judging, forgiving Christian community, which has transcended the burden of tension and strain.

The functions of leadership briefly suggested here are not the sole prerogative of the minister or chairman or any other designated leader. Various members of the group should assume responsibility for fulfilling different leadership functions as the need arises. All members are responsible for the *process* of reaching a decision, and for the *outcome* of the decision. Research in social science indicates that these leadership functions are essential:

1. The issue must be defined and clearly understood. Much controversy comes because people do not comprehend the real issue and get off on irrelevant ones! "*Now isn't the real point at issue . . . ?*"
2. A "permissive" accepting atmosphere must be created in which all feel free to differ or to agree, and even to express hostility. In this setting, people should be helped to accept differences as normal and expected as indispensable aids in probing the angles of a controversy! "*Would you all be willing to listen to an opinion that disagrees vigorously—nay, violently—with those already expressed?*"
3. Ground rules should be established to provide freedom of speech, orderly discussion, and a fair and respected hearing for all points of view. No matter how heated the discussion becomes the chairman and group members should take responsibility for following the ground rules: "*Some of us—probably myself—may get*



'carried away' in this discussion. I may need your help in keeping order and remembering that we are Christians."

4. It should not be assumed that because persons express disagreement they necessarily *are* in disagreement. A good device, when sharp issue is taken with a statement, is to ask the dissenter to restate the point made by the person with whom he is apparently disagreeing to that person's satisfaction: *"Bill, why don't you try to state what you think Charley said so that we can be determined whether you really disagree with him or have merely misunderstood him?"*
5. All available facts should be assembled, through such means as study, reading, field observation, and consultation with experts. This marshaling of data is a form of "acting," for some attitudinal change may occur as people are confronted with new situations and exposed problems outside their usual routines: *"Let's go and see firsthand what it is we're discussing."*
6. Judgment and decision should be postponed until the facts are at hand, but not indefinitely: *"Shouldn't we wait until Charley can make his report before we get into that aspect too deeply?"*
7. All possible options, approaches, or courses of action should be weighed and frankly discussed. The expected results or outcomes need also to be

evaluated: *"Let's stop and consider what the alternatives are, and what we might anticipate in each one."*

8. Some course of action should be determined. If agreement cannot be reached on a single action, it may be possible to concede two or three alternative approaches which could be tested in a pilot project or tried, in turn, for a limited period. All parties concerned would observe the testing as objectively as possible: *"Since we can't seem to agree, why not try a 'dog run' on each of these?"*
9. Time should be given to re-evaluating, replanning, and reflecting on what happened and why it turned out as it did. All members of the group need to understand what they have been involved in and the relation of their study and action to some of the large, unresolved issues before the church and the world: *"Now that we can think more calmly about this, would it be helpful to try to understand our heated discussion? For example, I know that I lost my temper . . ."*

No Substitute for Open Discussion

All of these leadership functions presuppose the use of informal, democratic discussion methods and a guarded "optimism" that Christians with the help of the Holy Spirit can realize their capacities and limitations so as to reach mature decisions and act responsibly. Tested discussion methods include:

- Introducing the issue or problem to be discussed and the people who will discuss it: *"Our problem is to decide... George and Frank have been studying it, and I think we may expect some difference of opinion between them."*
- Asking leading, probing questions that will stimulate group response and help to point up the nature of the controversy and areas of disagreement: *"Have you ever tried to argue the other side, just to understand it a little better?"*
- Keeping the discussion moving along: *"I think we've exhausted that point. Let's take up Mrs. Elder's question."*
- Drawing all group members into the discussion: *"We've been going at this pretty fast—it's hard to get a word in edge-wise. Let's try a minute of silence to let anyone who hasn't expressed himself have a say."*
- Bringing in viewpoints that have not been expressed: *"Is there another point of view yet to be heard on this?"*
- Enabling group members to communicate with one another by questions, interpretation of what people have said to one another: *"Is this what you're saying, Bob . . . ?"*
- Summarizing frequently and briefly in a recapitulation of what has been said, points of agreement, and disagreement: *"We seem to have three points of view so far. On the other hand . . ."*
- Guarding against too-quick and easy agreement or jumping to conclusions before all points have been considered: *"I notice that several of us have not expressed themselves and look a little uneasy. Have we really covered the subject yet?"*
- Sensing readiness of the group to probe one aspect more deeply or to move on to another: *"Correct me if I'm wrong, but I have the feeling we've just about squeezed all the juice out of the first item."*
- Bringing in additional data or suggestion that group members do so: *"Obviously we need a little more information if we are to discuss this responsibly . . ."*
- Helping the group to reach a decision, or a course of action—even the decision to go on disagreeing: *"Our discussion has been going around in circles for the last five minutes. Are we ready to reach a decision, or do we need more time and more data?"*
- Anticipating next steps, what goes beyond the immediate discussion? These may be long-range plans or a series of successive steps: *"Where do we go from here? What's the first step?"*
- Helping the group to evaluate the decision and the results of it. Even if no real consensus could be reached, the discussion has not been in vain. Some gains have been made in understanding issues and persons. Some learning has taken place that will be helpful in tackling

the next problem: "*I must admit I've had to modify my own position. How about the rest of you?*"

What goes on in a discussion group is extremely complex. Great sensitivity is needed on the part of leaders and members to perceive the forces of influence and to note those which impel toward change or conformity.

Discussion leadership requires sensitive listening and openness. Preachers and lecturers may have to unlearn the exclusive approach to a subject through the public-speaking arts in order to listen and to be more fully aware of the reactions and interactions of the group.

Groups Are Made Up of Persons

Any understanding in depth of groups and controversies is based on knowledge and perception of personal and interpersonal relationships. Some persons "naturally" attract others. Some naturally antagonize others, seem to carry grudges and feelings of rancor or rejection. There are "odd balls" who harp on their pet issues. Zealots and martyrs are quick to sacrifice themselves and the cause. Some persons need skillful counseling and supporting relationships in small groups before they can relate themselves constructively to controversial questions and

issues. Not every group is ready *now* to leap into the midst of a "hot" discussion even with the most skillful leadership. Such a group ought to be helped to become aware of its own limitations in order to extend them.

Small Groups Not Mob Scenes

Social science studies have tested the values and effectiveness of small groups. Five to seven members is considered the ideal size for maximum participation and interaction; up to ten or twelve will do. More than twenty persons is considered a large group, and in large groups the interaction of the knowledge and experience of individual members will be sharply limited. The influence of dictators and benevolent despots is magnified in large groups where few will be bold enough to challenge them. Authoritarian personalities can be more easily approached in small groups, and their influence can be diluted without large-scale social damage.

Dealing with controversy always involves shock, risk, and danger. But these can be minimized when we grasp the creative uses and goals of controversy. Hopefully, priests and prophets can put aside their fears of conflict and give up the middle of the road, instructed by their allies, the social scientists, and stirred and corrected by the Holy Spirit.



The Creative Role of Conflict in Intergroup Relations

by Dan W. Dodson

Dr. Dodson is Director, Center for Human Relations and Community Studies, New York University. This article is used by permission, and is taken from his address to the Eleventh Annual Conference of the National Association of Intergroup Relations Officials in 1957. It is included here because of its implications for churchmen in the context of the subject of "conflict."

SINCE 1941 heavy emphasis has been given to educational and psychological approaches to intergroup relations. I mean by this that we have worked on such problems as the nature of prejudice and the ways people thought about one another. We have pursued that illusive goal which has been the dream of many people—namely, that if we would rear just one generation of children free of prejudice, our whole problem would be solved.

While all of these efforts have contributed something to our knowledge of human relations, the missing dimension, the one least represented in the literature and in the activities in which we have been engaged, has

been (1) the nature of intergroup relations and (2) insight into the nature of conflict itself. In my judgment these are tied together intimately and need to be thought of in a different context from that which has characterized most of our efforts up to the present time.

Prejudice and Groups

I should like to begin by making three basic assumptions on which to predicate the rest of what I want to say:

The first is that all of us are born into groups. The groups into which we are born build systems of values, perceptions, and attitudes into us. This inevitably means that all of us

are prejudiced. There is no such thing as an unprejudiced person if he lives in any kind of social organization. The groups into which he is born teach him not only the particular values of that group but also teach him how to perceive. In other words the objects, the behaviors, all of that which has cognitive meaning in man's life is built into him by the groups of which he is a part. The best way to illustrate this is that if it were possible to rear a child without any knowledge of culture at all and turn him loose in a city that might be devoid of people with all the modern gadgets, these would have no significance for him unless and until he learned the culture that taught him how to use them. Hence, not only are we taught to prejudge what will happen in various relations of peoples to one another, but the very capacity to perceive is built upon the fact that we do learn to prejudge many, many things in life. [If I meet a grizzly bear on the highway at night, I'm going to prejudge the situation.]

The Normalcy of Conflict

The second assumption is that conflict is one of the normal ways through which peoples interact with one another. Most of us, and particularly those of us in the human relations business, come out of backgrounds that have built into us great commitments. Most often these are predicated on the stereotype that we draw from Micah's great vision of the time "when man shall beat his swords into plowshares and his spears into pruning hooks and he shall lay down his arms and study war no more." As great as this vision

is and as great as is the need for us to find an alternative to war as a means of settling our disputes, you and I know today that if there is to be freedom in a society, there is going to be difference; and if there is going to be difference of interests, peoples will jostle into one another, and there is going to be conflict.

The challenge to us is not to find utopia in which there is to be no more conflict. This would be stultifying and would be the last place most of us would want to live. Our problem is rather that of finding ways to use conflict toward creative ends in our social relationships.

Vested Interest in Group Status

The third assumption is that all of us live in groups and that these groups have what they consider to be equities in the social order, and as the status of relations of a group changes, restructuring becomes necessary. It is next to impossible to restructure relations between groups without some hostility and conflict and prejudicial behavior of peoples toward one another on a group basis.

All of us prejudge—I am prejudiced against Southern white citizens' councils. I assume you are too. It is this dimension of intergroup relations which has not been adequately considered. I would contend that we bring to our associations as individuals the attitudes and values of life that the groups to which we belong have built into us and that these seem useful and superior to us because we know them and feel comfortable with them. I would also contend, at least for purposes of this discussion, that attitudes between

peoples are much more a reflection of the structural relations of their groups to one another than are they a matter of what is the psychology or dynamics of prejudice.

Acceptable . . . if Appropriate

Let me illustrate what I mean: Many Southern whites, for instance, by and large have no prejudice against Negroes in their group-assigned place. As long as they keep their place they accept them and have them in their homes to cook and serve their meals, rear their children, and all the things that go with it. Their resistance is to a change in the relationship between the groups, and their prejudices reinforce the present structural relations between the groups. Once you change the structure of the group's relations so that it becomes permissible for Negroes to ride buses, for instance, and once it is established that this is going to be the relationship between the groups in this particular form of association, there seems to be little difficulty in accepting the change of relation, and no prejudice or hostility is connected with it. It is also noticeable that when such whites come to New York City, where it is taken for granted that the change of relationships of the groups is in operation, they have no trouble riding subways and mixing in situations, sitting in theaters with people of different backgrounds, and they show little of the symptoms of prejudice which characterize much of their irrational behavior in their own locale.

This hostility can be turned on and off with amazing facility. Do you remember Pearl Harbor? Do

you remember the hysteria on the Pacific coast? Do you remember what happened to the minority when structural relations were changed by government abdicating its responsibility for enforcing civil rights of peoples following Pearl Harbor and the attendant stripping of rights and citizenship of those of the Japanese background group? Do you remember the propaganda about the Japanese—the people with the buck teeth, the gold fillings, and all the things that went with it? And if you were to survey the same groups today for comparable hostility, stereotyping, and prejudicial content, you would find very little of it. We now think of the Japanese as nice and tremendously interesting people and have a very warm relationship to them.

How does it happen that prejudices are turned on and off with such amazing facility? I would contend that the prejudging and the hostility are *symptomatic* of relationships between groups and not by and large the *cause* of particular relations between them.

Conflict Accompanies Change

Is this relevant to an understanding of the issues facing us in America? From this position it is more apparent as to what is involved when the structural relations between groups in this country are changed or threatened in areas as significant as desegregation of education. What we see is the manifestation of prejudice, violence, and other kinds of hostilities toward peoples as they go through the restructuring of their relations to one another.

I know of few ways in which

group relations can be restructured except through conflict. On the other hand the major portion of our agencies are very afraid of conflict. All too many of the agencies we represent were created by mayors and other responsible officials whose interest was in keeping conflict from occurring in their communities. Too often we are expected to placate the conflicting interests rather than use such conflict to achieve creative goals in which the relations between groups become restructured without destructive conflict.

Be that as it may, the cutting edges of a democratic society are the points of tension and conflict and are not at those places in which the issues have already been decided and groups have more or less accepted their structural relations to one another.

The Role of Power

The significance of this approach to intergroup relations can be better understood by an examination of civil rights in America. A good case could be made that growth and interest in civil rights has stemmed not from what we have done as ameliorative agencies but rather because of what has happened in the restructuring of relations between groups because of the broad social changes which have occurred.

The war brought millions of Negroes, for instance, from Southern communities into our large Northern, Eastern, and Western cities. They today hold the political balance of power, theoretically, at least, in six of the larger states of the union: New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Illinois, Michigan,

and perhaps California. These are states in which there is a relatively even balance of power between the political parties, and the Negro vote can tip the scales in either direction. Consequently, it is at long last beginning to dawn upon the political structure of our society that civil rights can be no longer ignored—we are getting today what we have not had since the reconstruction era—a serious interest of the Federal Government in the civil rights of the people. Needless to say, the courts found ways of reversing previous decisions and interpreting rights in line with what is the political realism of the society. Naturally, the Negro group itself, together with other minorities, has come to sense some of its power.

If one believes, however, that the improved status of Negroes has come because of what we have done in changing attitudes of Americans—that is, that it has come through a change of heart of the American people, rather than because of the change of power relationships between groups—he had best look at



the American Indians and the Mexicans in the Southwest and the Pacific coast who do not have such power and such political leverage.

The Restructuring Process

As it is in the nation so it is also in our communities. Cities that never before paid any attention to the deplorable conditions of Negroes are today beginning to awaken as the size of the Negro community grows and as Negroes develop sophistication in the use of the ballot. This vast in-migration of Negroes to the inner cities of all our major metropolises has created new power relationships between groups in these places. When it is realized that between 1950 and 1955, 12 million people moved to the large metropolitan areas of America and that there was an attendant growth out of this 12 million of only 2,400,000 in the inner cities themselves, one gets some sense of the great impact that migration has had upon American people since the war. It has meant the movement of the white middle class to the suburban areas, and it has meant the taking over of large sections of the inner cities by the minority groups—heavily Negro—as they have taken the places left by the whites as they have fled to suburbia.

This means that in practically all our cities there is a great realignment of the power structure. The relationship between the groups is being rapidly restructured. Thus there is a resurgence of hostility, animosity, prejudice, ill feeling, and sometimes open violence. I submit to you, however, that we learn very rapidly from the structure of group

relations in which we find ourselves. Today, in our Northern communities, we are wrestling with what is now called *de facto* segregation. No one thought in the years past, prior to the Supreme Court decision, that segregation on a neighborhood basis was wrong at all. But when the Negro group achieves power enough to challenge such segregation, which carries with it discrimination in services to Negro children, many of our people have found it difficult to accept the new relationship between the races, and there has been much dragging of feet and complaint about Negroes being so pushy.

Likewise in housing we are facing comparable challenges. Prior to the change in power, very few people complained that Negroes lived in segregated neighborhoods. Many felt that they should have had better housing, and much planning was to provide more good housing for Negroes—so there were built, even in Southern communities, Negro neighborhoods for middle-income people. When Metropolitan Life Insurance built Stuyvesant Town it built a project approximately one seventh in size (about the proportion of Negroes in the population of New York City) for the Negroes in the Harlem community. Today there is the demand that this structural relationship in housing be changed. There is pressure to get not only integrated public housing but to get integrated neighborhood living again. This has brought about much complaint about Negroes invading white communities and other manifestations of hostility. But very rapidly we are facing a showdown fight on whether or not Negro per-

sons may buy in neighborhoods befitting their economic means and cultural status the same as do all other American citizens. This pressure has brought manifestations of great hostility and prejudice from some persons who might have been called liberals in other times. They are being dubbed "fair-weather liberals" when they balk over changing some of these more basic relationships between peoples. I dare say, given a few years, however, and if we do our job of helping rationalize the changes that are, relatively speaking, forced upon them, no one will think anything strange about a balanced neighborhood—no one will think anything wrong about living in areas in which peoples representing all Americans of comparable cultural and social backgrounds live.

Doctrine or Vested Interest?

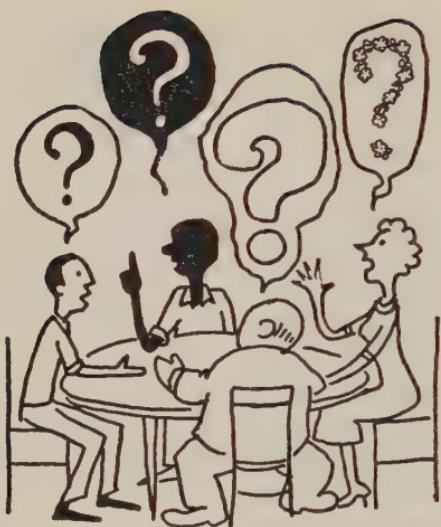
So it is in the field of interfaith relations. Today hostilities between the faith groups stem very little from differences of theological beliefs. If these were the only differences between our groups, they would be about settled. The big issues between us are, instead, what are *equitable* relationships between these religious groups in American life. They have been pointed out in a recent number of *The Journal of Social Issues*. Much more have the fights become power fights between faith groups rather than controversies over dogma and creed. The big issues, for instance, today are relations between church and state, to what extent shall the schools teach religious materials, or on such things as child care—who gets which children in adoption agencies, shall the so-called fringe

benefits be extended or constructed for children under religious programs? These are power fights. They are fights between structures in the community over things in which dogma and belief are only peripheral. The expressed hostilities and the prejudices take their cue not from deep-seated stereotypes and pre-judgments about who are Catholics, who are Jews, or who are Protestants but instead from what is the structural relation of one group to the other as they haggle over the changing relationships in their own vested interests.

Restructuring and Conflict

What is the significance, then, of this kind of approach to intergroup relations? One implication of it is that those of us who work in the field should understand the role of conflict in the restructuring of such relations. Where the restructuring takes place such as has happened in Southern communities it is understandable that there would be hostility and perhaps what the weather people would call "turbulence" as the climate changes. It would be expected that those who have vested interests would give them up only reluctantly. It would be predictable that those who have been denied these privileges, who have been barred from them by legal procedures and by government power, would get a new lease on life and aspire toward the breaking down of such barriers. It would be taken for granted that this would bring hostility in its wake.

Once the issue is settled, however, through political power or conflict—and there is the understanding that



the changed relations are going to be—it is amazing how quickly people can adjust to them. Take, for instance, Clinton, Tennessee—people who were arrested for rioting last year come back later and apologize to the local officials for their actions and accept the change of relationships between groups for what they are and come to accept this pattern of behavior as normal. In Little Rock, violence rapidly subsided as it was made clear that the force of the Federal Government is behind the change in the structural relationship of the groups. Once this principle is established—and made plain enough that even the governor finds out about it—there will be little difficulty in Little Rock. In Nashville, Tennessee—a comparable kind of thing—as soon as it was clear that the force of the local government was behind the desegregation program there was no difficulty. This is of course what led Kenneth Clark to write in a monograph: that the conflict tends to come at the point at which the changed policy is being

decided (being tested perhaps one would better say) and tends not to continue after the test has been made.

"Lancing the Carbuncle"

This approach to conflict places an awesome responsibility on those of us who are in intergroup relations leadership to make certain that our agencies themselves do not become instrumentalities that stamp it out before it has achieved its purpose. Sometimes a carbuncle has to be lanced, and you only prolong the suffering if you put ointment on it designed to keep the festering from coming to a head. There is a great danger that we may become placaters or that we may become persons who use the status of our offices to keep change from happening—that is, to keep relations from being restructured—rather than allowing conflict to run its course to the point at which restructuring takes place.

I was most impressed with this, I think, in a controversy in which a Mayor's Committee on Unity was involved. On 125th Street, in New York City, a consumer protective group started picketing the stores on 125th Street in October of 1945. Between that time and Christmas, the stores lost over a quarter of a million dollars because of their picketing based on charges that the stores used unethical practices and were not sympathetic to the Negro community itself. There was sufficient basis of fact in their criticisms that it was impossible for a person representing the government to intervene in it unless and until there was some hope of change in the attitudes of the merchants and

unless and until there was a new understanding between the groups as to what was a way of behavior. Consequently, the picketing ran from the middle of October to the middle of December in one of the most lucrative of shopping seasons at a great loss in trade to the merchants. I would have considered it immoral to have jumped into that situation without some assurance that there was a lesson learned out of it, that the restructuring of relations between the two groups had been accomplished.

The Fear of Conflict

The conflict issue involves almost every agency with which we are working. I think that one of the most difficult issues in education, for instance, is that the educators consider it to be tremendously bad if there is conflict in their schools. All of us, however, know that if there is freedom, there is going to be conflict. It becomes embarrassing to the school system if such happens, consequently there is a tendency to become so authoritarian in school programs that there is little possibility for youngsters to interact with freedom and little opportunity for them to restructure relationships between themselves.

The same could be said for most of the other agencies of community. All are afraid of conflict. They are afraid of the bad name it would give. They find ways of circumventing it to keep it from happening. I would contend, however, that to the extent to which conflict is averted as a normal part of relations we become undemocratic and from a mental-health point of view unsound in pro-

graming. One job we have, I think, is to help all of our agencies understand that a type of conflict and tension between peoples is not necessarily bad.

Our big issue is then how to handle conflict toward creative ends. Labor-management teaches us many things about it, one of which is that we accept rules of the game by which we fight our battles. For instance, sometimes labor has to go on strike—and the strike has become a rather effective means of achieving a restructuring of relations between management and labor—but out of the strike pattern of the years has emerged something new, namely, the respect on the part of management of labor's right to strike, and strike-breaking has gone by the board in most instances. The devastating strikes tend to bring intervention of government, and there has gradually developed a procedure through which the industrial community moves toward the settling of its differences short of the stoppage of work. This does not mean that there is not conflict still. It does not mean that there are not differences, but it does mean that a way of handling these differences was created so that out of it comes more creative and constructive relations between groups and less of the stultifying violence that used to characterize our industrial life. [EDITOR'S NOTE: Dr. Dodson's address was made before the steel strike of 1960, which was complicated by many factors that overrode these points in 1957.]

The Challenge to Interpret

It is not easy to interpret to the power structure of our communities

this point of view. It is not easy to help them understand how these things operate. But the intergroup relations person who does a creative job must somehow help those with whom he works to understand the normal use of conflict in community relations.

Obstacles or Catalysts?

There is another dimension to it for human relations persons to ponder. When one looks at Hunter's book *The Community Power Structure*, he is impressed at how far down on the totem pole of power structure in the community is the human relations agency person. This raises serious questions as to what we can or should do in our efforts. Are we too often the instrumentalities of the power structure of the community with the job of holding in line the peoples who may be ambitious and up and coming? Does it mean that

we are handmaidens of the vested interests who are tied up with the power structure to the point that we really prevent democratic relations from emerging rather than helping them come about? This is, to me, one of the greater issues with which we are involved as professional people. How can we, on the one hand, work with and through power in the community and at the same time be free and independent enough that we can operate as technicians in negotiating differences? How can we have some hand in stimulating the minority group, for instance, to make greater demands that would bring about a restructuring of relations between themselves and the community of which they are a part—even through creative conflict?

This is the challenge, it seems to me, for human relations in our era ahead.

Problems of Communication

Not all, but a significant amount, of verbal conflict is precipitated or intensified by the failure to communicate. It is not necessary to assume that all conflict could be resolved if only men "understood" one another, in order to believe that communication is of vital importance. The following three articles deal with the problems of communication. The first one appeared originally in the May 1955 issue of SOCIAL PROGRESS, and is reprinted here because of its relevance to the subject of this issue. The last two appeared originally in ETC., Winter 1952, the journal of the International Society for General Semantics, and are reprinted in abridged form with permission.

When Is an Apple Not an Apple?

By H. B. Sissel

THOSE who understand the creative role of controversy in the process by which persons interact no longer fear it as it was once feared *so long as the controversy results from perceived differences of opinion and viewpoint.*

However, the italicized qualification is of vital importance. There is a kind of controversy which arises, not out of *perceived differences of opinion, but out of an unrealized failure to communicate.* This kind of

controversy can be at best time-consuming and at worst destructive. It occurs because the same words "mean" different things to different people—a simple and obvious observation, hardly worthy of consideration, since everyone "knows" this. But *does* everyone "know" it?

If it is essential for workmen to fully understand the nature of their tools, it is essential that people whose main tools are words have the same understanding of the implements of

their trade. This is crucially true for the person who writes or speaks, reads or listens, in the field of social education and action. Semantic discipline is a necessity.

Semantics is the name given to the "science" that deals with "the meaning of meaning." It is not to be confused with etymology or word definition or with what Flesch calls "the art of plain talk." In nonscientific terminology, semantics might be said to be concerned with the answers to the question: "What do you 'mean' when you say that this particular word 'means' thus and so?" A popular approach to the subject can be found in Stuart Chase's book, *The Tyranny of Words*, published in 1938, or in his more recent *The Power of Words*, coauthored by Marian Tyler.

Those who speak, write, read, and listen to words know what it is to be misunderstood. Some semantic precautions can minimize the degree and likelihood of misunderstanding. Continued indebtedness to Stuart Chase for both of his books is acknowledged in what follows.

The Communications Problem

If a lecturer on "Antivivisection" addresses an American audience in Japanese, no communication takes place, and no misunderstanding results. The lecturer knows that the audience has not understood what he said, and the audience know that they have not understood. They will not be inclined to call him liar, fool, or knave. The cause of antivivisection has been neither advanced nor seriously injured. No communication has taken place, and everyone knows it.

But if the lecturer addresses the same audience on the same subject (it could as easily be "Communism" or "Gambling") in English, all hell may break loose. Some of the audience will walk out after the first ten minutes; others will clap and cheer; still others will hiss and boo. During the question-and-answer period the speaker is both viciously attacked and vigorously defended by men and women of reasonable mind and at least moderate good will.

This chaos may be partly due to what theologians would call sin. It may also be due, in part, to the fact that everyone assumes communication has taken place when in reality none has. The lecturer has sent out a series of sounds ("words" or "verbal symbols") which he unconsciously assumes have the same "meaning" to those who hear them as they have to him. His audience have heard these sounds, which in turn have "evoked" certain "concepts" or "ideas" or "emotions" inside their own skins; and they have assumed that what happened inside themselves has corresponded with what happened inside the speaker. (It may be painful to accept, but we ought to realize that *words do not so much convey "meaning" as evoke meaning.*)

The sounds emitted by the speaker did not "mean" the same to his audience as they did to him. Clear communication has not taken place. But this is not the tragedy. The tragedy is that no one is aware of it. No one asks, "Have we communicated, or have we drawn a semantic blank?"

What Is a "Fact"?

Just what is "meant" by the word "fact" is probably understood best,

if at all, by the physical scientists. Most of the things we refer to as "facts" are, from the point of view of the microscope, actually processes or a series of events.

A rather simple nonverbal object which is given the label "apple" is a good example of such a "fact." The round, red, juicy object which the young clerk lays in his desk drawer on October 1, intending to eat it for lunch, he calls an "apple." That it reposes in his desk drawer is a "fact." But he loves his work and forgets all about his apple until he cleans out his desk on November 1. The nonverbal object he intended to eat for his lunch is no longer round, red, and juicy, and it will end up in his wastebasket.

Apple-October 1 is not apple-November 1, and the "fact" has changed. If one wanted to be precise in his speech about "apples," he might well want to take into consideration the element of time. When is an apple not an apple? When does the "blossom" cease to be a "blossom" and become an "apple"? When does the nonverbal object, which on October 1 is edible, but on November 1 is inedible, cease to be an "apple" and become "garbage"?

Most "facts" turn out to be *processes*, and the point in the process at which we discuss it as a "fact" needs to be taken into consideration, if not actually indicated.

Of course, with relatively simple physical objects such as an apple, men can understand what other men are "talking about" even under the changes and ravages of time. What happens when men talk to one another about *collections* of "objects" (like "all the gray horses in the State

of Illinois"), or more complex *objectifications of collections* (like "the Russians" or "mankind"), or still more complex *abstractions* of nonphysical "entities" (like "American foreign policy" or "free enterprise"), or *nonphysical ideas, qualities, or values* (like "truth," "beauty," "justice," or "freedom") is more problematical. It would seem likely that communication with the use of such terms is at a minimum, *unless* a certain mutuality of common experience, belief, tradition, trust, etc., is shared by those who seek to communicate in these terms.

Confusing the Issue

Communication between persons is further hampered by failure to distinguish between what Chase calls "facts, inferences, value judgments, and purposeful communiqués":

1. "In our city 497 young people between the ages of 12 and 18 were booked by the police in 1954, as compared with 401 in 1953"—a "factual" statement which can be verified by checking the police records.

2. "Juvenile delinquency is increasing in our city"—an inference based upon *one* interpretation of the above fact, and involving *one* definition of "juvenile delinquency."

3. "This is a terrible city in which to raise kids"—a value judgment involving a personal reaction.

4. "The city council should pass a curfew for young people under 18 years of age"—a purposeful commiqué designed to promote action.

Of necessity, much of the communication attempted between persons and groups today involves only

numbers 3 and 4 above, with occasional use of 2, and infrequent use of 1. This is not to be regarded necessarily as "bad," except when speaker and listeners are not aware of it, when facts, inferences, value judgments, and purposeful communiqués get all mixed up together and are taken as equal in weight. What would happen if television ad writers and viewers took seriously these distinctions is wonderful to contemplate.

Some Semantic Precautions

Perfect verbal communication between persons is probably not possible in this world, since it would require the bringing of identical experiences to the same words. However, communication can be facilitated by the utilization of a few simple and elementary semantic precautions, which can be supplied in actuality by the speaker or writer, or mentally by the listener or reader. Indebtedness to Mr. Chase is acknowledged.

1. A simple awareness of some of the limitations of language, the realization that words are *symbols* which, in order to have "meaning," must refer to some object, entity, quality, etc., which has real existence, is essential. Also mutual agreement as to the referent (the reality "out there" for which the word is a symbol) is fundamental—does the referent exist inside or outside the speaker's skin? Can its existence be verified by observation in the part of another rational human being? Or, for the sake of communication, can its existence, though nonverifiable, be assumed by those attempting to communicate with one another (i.e.,

do they have sufficient mutuality of experience, belief, trust, and affection to use such words as "freedom," and "human nature" meaningfully with one another?)

2. Some acquaintance with even a popular approach to semantics (such as Hayakawa's *Language in Action*, or Chase's *The Tyranny of Words*) is a revolutionary experience for the user of words who has never given serious thought to the nature of his tools. One need not accept all the "philosophical" assumptions of some of the semanticists in order to learn from them. For example, it is not necessary to assume, with Stuart Chase, that only questions with "scientifically" verifiable answers can be discussed meaningfully in order to avoid the pitfalls of such a discussion.

3. The frequent use of index numbers which deny identity between two entities that have the same verbal label (apple-October 1 is not apple-November 1, "the American way"-1940 is not "the American way"-1960) will avoid some confusion and misunderstanding.

4. The frequent use of quotation marks (e.g., "The 'facts' of the matter are . . .") will convey the message that something is lacking or present that ought not to be—"Beware, this word is loaded."

5. The use of the hyphen is sometimes necessary to show that two events or entities are organically tied to each other in such a way that to speak of them as separate robs both of some of their "meaning." For example, in Christian theology the old dichotomy between "flesh and spirit" might be less of a stumbling block if it were written flesh-spirit.

6. The frequent use of the term "etc." serves admirably to show that the whole story has not been told, that something has been left out. (The name of the journal of the International Society for General Semantics, 400 West North Street, Chicago 10, Ill., is *ETC.*)

7. Unless communication is being attempted within a particular religious, cultural, racial, etc., community, the preceding of any inference, value judgment, or purposeful communiqué with some statement that shows that what follows comes from a particular "point of view" or context of belief is almost necessary. The common breakdown of communication between theologians and social scientists, for example, is a case in point, not so much of incompatibility of data, as of incompatibility of assumptions and a failure to understand that the other discipline is speaking from within its

own particular structure of "meaning."

The fact that there is not greater misunderstanding among us, the fact that men *do* have some measure of communication with one another, is in a sense a tribute to man's ability to make allowance for his own limitations. (And of course, for Christians, the only real communicator of "Truth" is the Holy Spirit.) Nevertheless, in combating the efforts of those who purposely or thoughtlessly ignore "the majesty of truth" and subtly dethrone it by premeditation, Christians must be careful to avoid contributing, by their ignorance, to the very evils they are seeking to combat. An elementary knowledge of semantics is a "must" for anyone who uses words in an effort to communicate with his fellow men, unless he is satisfied with lack of communication at best and unnecessary antagonism at worst.

Communication: Its Blocking and Its Facilitation

**By Carl R. Rogers, Professor of Psychology,
University of Chicago**

IT IS from a background of experience with communication in counseling and psychotherapy that I want to present here two ideas. I wish to state what I believe is one of the major factors in blocking or impeding communication, and then I wish to present what in our experience has proved to be a very impor-

tant way of improving or facilitating communication.

I would like to propose, as a hypothesis for consideration, that the major barrier to mutual interpersonal communication is our very natural tendency to judge, to evaluate, to approve or disapprove, the statement of the other person, or the

other group. Let me illustrate my meaning with some very simple examples. As you leave a lecture meeting, one of the statements you are likely to hear is, "I didn't like that man's talk." Now what do you respond? Almost invariably your reply will be either approval or disapproval of the attitude expressed. Either you respond: "I didn't either. I thought it was terrible," or else you tend to reply, "Oh, I thought it was really good." In other words, your primary reaction is to evaluate what has just been said to you, to evaluate it from *your* point of view, your own frame of reference.

Or take another example. Suppose I say with some feeling, "I think the Republicans are behaving in ways that show a lot of good sound sense these days," what is the response that arises in your mind as you listen? The overwhelming likelihood is that it will be evaluative. You will find yourself agreeing, or disagreeing, or making some judgment about me such as "He must be a conservative," or "He seems solid in his thinking." Or let us take an illustration from the international scene. Russia says vehemently, "The treaty with Japan is a war plot on the part of the United States." We rise as one person to say, "That's a lie!"

This last illustration brings in another element connected with my hypothesis. Although the tendency to make evaluations is common in almost all interchange of language, it is very much heightened in those situations where feelings and emotions are deeply involved. So the stronger our feelings, the more likely it is that there will be no mutual ele-

ment in the communication. There will be just two ideas, two feelings, two judgments, missing each other in psychological space. I'm sure you recognize this from your own experience. When you have not been emotionally involved yourself, and have listened to a heated discussion, you often go away thinking, "Well, they actually weren't talking about the same thing." And they were not. Each was making a judgment, an evaluation, from his own frame of reference. There was really nothing which could be called communication in any genuine sense. This tendency to react to any emotionally meaningful statement by forming an evaluation of it from our own point of view, is, I repeat, the major barrier to interpersonal communication.

But is there any way of solving this problem, of avoiding this barrier? I feel that we are making exciting progress toward this goal and I would like to present it as simply as I can. Real communication occurs, and this evaluative tendency is avoided, when we listen with understanding. What does that mean? It means *to see the expressed idea and attitude from the other person's point of view, to sense how it feels to him, to achieve his frame of reference in regard to the thing he is talking about.*

The Other Viewpoint

Stated so briefly, this may sound absurdly simple, but it is not. It is an approach which we have found extremely potent in the field of psychotherapy. It is the most effective agent we know for altering the basic personality structure of an individual, and improving his re-

lationships and his communications with others. If I can listen to what he can tell me, if I can understand how it seems to him, if I can see its personal meaning for him, if I can sense the emotional flavor which it has for him, then I will be releasing potent forces of change in him. If I can really understand how he hates his father, or hates the university, or hates Communists—if I can catch the flavor of his fear of insanity, or his fear of atom bombs, or of Russia—it will be of the greatest help to him in altering those very hatreds and fears, and in establishing realistic and harmonious relationships with the very people and situations toward which he has felt hatred and fear. We know from our research that such empathic understanding—understanding *with* a person, not *about* him—is such an effective approach that it can bring about major changes in personality.

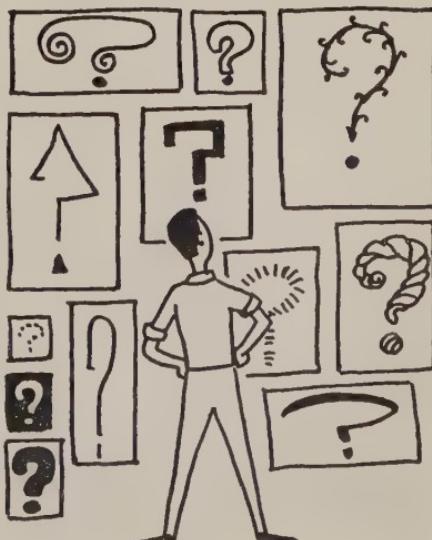
Some of you may be feeling that you listen well to people, and that you have never seen such results. The chances are very great indeed that your listening has not been of the type I have described. Fortunately I can suggest a little laboratory experiment which you can try to test the quality of your understanding. The next time you get into an argument with your wife, or your friend, or with a small group of friends, just stop the discussion for a moment and for an experiment, institute this rule: "Each person can speak up for himself only *after* he has first restated the ideas and feelings of the previous speaker accurately, and to that speaker's satisfaction." You see what this would mean. It would simply mean that be-

fore presenting your own point of view, it would be necessary for you to really achieve the other speaker's frame of reference—to understand his thoughts and feelings so well that you could summarize them for him. Sounds simple, doesn't it? But if you try it, you will discover it one of the most difficult things you have ever tried to do. However, once you have been able to see the other's point of view, your own comments will have to be drastically revised. You will also find the emotion going out of the discussion, the differences being reduced, and those differences which remain being of a rational and understandable sort. . . .

If, then, this way of approach is an effective avenue to good communication and good relationships, as I am quite sure you will agree if you try the experiment I have mentioned, why is it not more widely tried and used? . . .

The Threat of Understanding

In the first place it takes courage, a quality which is not too wide-



spread. If you really understand another person in this way, if you are willing to enter his private world and see the way life appears to him without any attempt to make evaluative judgments, you run the risk of being changed yourself. You might see it his way, you might find yourself influenced in your attitudes or your personality. This risk of being changed is one of the most frightening prospects most of us can face. Most of us are afraid to take that risk. If we had a Russian Communist speaker here tonight, how many of us would dare to try to see the world from his point of view? The majority of us could not *listen*; we would find ourselves compelled to *evaluate*, because listening would seem too dangerous. So the first requirement is courage. . . .

But there is a second obstacle. It is just when emotions are strongest that it is most difficult to achieve the frame of reference of the other person or group. Yet it is the time the attitude is most needed, if communication is to be established. A third party, who is able to lay aside his own feelings can assist by listening with understanding to each person or group and clarifying the views and attitudes each holds. We have found this very effective in small groups in which contradictory or antagonistic attitudes exist. When the parties to a dispute realize that they are being understood, that someone sees how the situation seems to them, the statements grow less exaggerated and less defensive. . . . The influence of such an understanding catalyst in the group permits the members to come closer and closer to the objective truth in-

volved in the relationship.

In this way mutual communication is established and some type of agreement becomes much more possible.

[There is], however, another obstacle connected with utilizing the approach I have described. Thus far all our experience has been with small face-to-face groups—groups exhibiting industrial tensions, religious tensions, racial tensions, and therapy groups in which many personal tensions are present. In these small groups our experience, confirmed by a limited amount of research, shows that this basic approach leads to improved communication, to greater acceptance of others and by others, and to attitudes which are more positive and more problem-solving in nature. There is a decrease in defensiveness, in exaggerated statements, in evaluative and critical behavior. But these findings are from small groups. What about trying to achieve understanding between larger groups that are geographically remote? Or between face-to-face groups who are not speaking for themselves, but simply as representatives of others . . . ? Frankly we do not know the answers to these questions. I believe the situation might be put this way. As social scientists we have a tentative test-tube solution of the problem of breakdown in communication. But to confirm the validity of this test-tube solution, and to adapt it to the enormous problems of communication breakdown between classes, groups, and nations, would involve additional funds, much more research, and creative thinking of a high order.

Barriers to Communication Between Men

**By F. J. Roethlisberger, Wallace Brett Donham Professor
of Human Relations, Harvard University
Graduate School of Business Administration**

IN THINKING about the many barriers to personal communication, particularly those which are due to differences of background, experience, and motivation, it seems to me extraordinary that any two persons can ever understand each other. Such reflections provoke the question of how communication is possible when people do not see and assume the same things and share the same values.

On this question there are two schools of thought. One school assumes that communication between A and B, for example, has failed when B does not accept what A has to say as being fact, true, or valid. The goal of communication is to get B to agree with A's opinions, ideas, facts, or information.

The position of the other school of thought is quite different. It assumes that communication has failed when B does not feel free to express his feelings to A because B fears they will not be accepted by A. Communication is facilitated when on the part of A or B or both there is a willingness to express and accept differences.

As these are quite divergent conceptions, let us explore them further with an example. Bill, an employee,

is talking with his boss in the boss's office. The boss says, "I think, Bill, that this is the best way to do your job." Bill says, "Oh yeah?" According to the first school of thought, this reply would be a sign of poor communication. Bill does not understand the best way of doing his work. To improve communication, therefore, it is up to the boss to explain to Bill why his way is the best.

From the point of view of the second school of thought, Bill's reply is neither a sign of good nor bad communication. Bill's response is indeterminate. What Bill means, the boss has an opportunity to find out if he so desires. Let us assume that this is what he chooses to do, i.e., find out what Bill means. So this boss tries to get Bill to talk more about his job while he (the boss) listens.

For purposes of simplification, I shall call the boss representing the first school of thought "Smith" and the boss representing the second school of thought "Jones." In the presence of the so-called same stimulus, each behaves differently. Smith chooses to *explain*, Jones chooses to *listen*. In my experience Jones's response works better than Smith's. It works better because Jones is making a more proper eval-

uation of what is taking place between him and Bill than Smith is. Let us test this hypothesis by continuing with our example.

Assumptions, Perceptions, and Feelings of Smith

Smith assumes that he understands what Bill means when Bill says, "Oh yeah!" so there is no need to find out. Smith is sure that Bill does not understand why this is the best way to do his job, so Smith has to tell him. In the process let us assume Smith is logical, lucid, and clear. He presents his facts and evidence well. But, alas, Bill remains unconvinced. What does Smith do? Operating under the assumption that what is taking place between him and Bill is something essentially logical, Smith can draw only one of two conclusions: (1) either he has not been clear enough, or (2) Bill is too . . . stupid to understand. So either he has to "spell out" his case in words of fewer and fewer syllables, or give up. Smith is reluctant to do the latter, so he continues to explain. What happens?

If Bill still does not accept Smith's explanation of why this is the best way for him to do his job, a pattern of interacting feelings is produced of which Smith is often unaware. The more Smith cannot get Bill to understand him, the more frustrated Smith becomes and the more Bill becomes a threat to his logical capacity. Since Smith sees himself as a fairly reasonable and logical chap, this is a difficult feeling to accept. It is much easier for him to perceive Bill as un-co-operative or stupid. This perception, however, will affect what Smith says and does. Under

these pressures Bill comes to be evaluated more and more in terms of Smith's values. By this process Smith tends to treat Bill's values as unimportant. He tends to deny Bill's uniqueness and difference. He treats Bill as if he had little capacity for self-direction.

Let us be clear. Smith does not see that he is doing these things. When he is feverishly scratching hieroglyphics on the back of an envelope, trying to explain to Bill why this is the best way to do his job, Smith is trying to be helpful. He is a man of good will and he wants to set Bill straight. This is the way Smith sees himself and his behavior. But it is for this very reason that Bill's "Oh yeahs" are getting under Smith's skin. "How dumb can a guy be?"

Unfortunately, Bill will hear this more than Smith's "good intentions." Bill will feel misunderstood. He will not see Smith as a man of good will trying to be helpful. Rather, he will perceive him as a threat to his self-esteem and personal integrity. Against this threat Bill will feel the need to defend himself at all cost. Not being as logically articulate as Smith, Bill expresses this need by saying, "Oh yeah!"

Assumptions, Perceptions, and Feelings of Jones

Let us leave this sad scene between Smith and Bill, which I fear is going to terminate by Bill either leaving in a huff or being kicked out of Smith's office. Let us turn for a moment to Jones and see what he is assuming, seeing, hearing, feeling, doing, and saying when he interacts with Bill.

Jones, it will be remembered, does

not assume that he knows what Bill means when he says "Oh yeah," so he has to find out. Moreover, he assumes that when Bill said this, he had not exhausted his vocabulary of his feelings. Bill may not necessarily mean one thing; he may mean several different things. So Jones decides to listen.

In this process Jones is not under any illusion that what will take place will be essentially logical. Rather, he is assuming that what will take place will be primarily an interaction of feelings. Therefore, he cannot ignore the feelings of Bill, the effect of Bill's feelings upon him, or the effect of his feelings upon Bill. He cannot ignore his relationship to Bill. He does not assume that Bill's attitude toward him makes no difference to what Bill will hear or accept. Therefore, Jones will be paying strict attention to all of the things Smith has ignored. Jones will be addressing himself to Bill's feelings, his own, and the interactions between them.

Jones will, therefore, realize that he had ruffled Bill's feelings with his comment, "I think, Bill, this is the best way to do your job." So instead of trying to get Bill to understand him, he decides to try to understand Bill. He does this by encouraging Bill to speak. Instead of telling Bill how he should feel or think, he asks Bill such questions as, is this what you feel, is this what you see, is this what you assume? Instead of ignoring Bill's evaluations as irrelevant, not valid, inconsequential, or false, he tries to understand Bill's reality as Bill feels it, perceives it, and assumes it to be. As Bill begins to open up, Jones's curiosity is

piqued by this process. Instead of seeing Bill as stupid, he perceives Bill is quite an interesting guy.

This is what Bill hears. Therefore, Bill feels understood and accepted as a person. He becomes less defensive. He is in a better frame of mind to explore and re-examine his own perceptions, feelings, and assumptions. In this process he perceives Jones as a source of help. Bill feels free to express his differences. He feels that Jones has some respect for his capacity for self-direction. These positive feelings toward Jones make Bill more inclined to say: "Well, Jones, I don't quite agree with you that this is the best way to do my job, but I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll try to do it that way for a few days, and then I'll tell you what I think."



Conclusions

I grant that my two orientations do not work themselves out in practice in quite as simple or neat a fashion as I have been able to work them out on paper. Bill could have

responded to Smith in many other ways. He might even have said, "O.K., boss, I agree that your way of doing my job is better." But Smith still would not have known how Bill felt when he made this statement or whether Bill was actually going to do his job differently. Likewise, Bill could have responded to Jones in a way different from my example. In spite of Jones's attitude, Bill might still be reluctant to express himself freely to his boss.

The purpose of my examples has not been to demonstrate the right or wrong way of doing something. My purpose has been to provide something concrete to point to when I make the following generalizations:

1. Smith represents to me a very common pattern of misunderstanding. It does not arise because Smith is not clear enough in expressing himself. It arises because of Smith's misevaluation of what is taking place when two people are talking together.

2. Smith's misevaluation of the process of personal communication consists of certain very common assumptions. Three of these very common assumptions are (a) that what is taking place is something essentially logical; (b) that words in themselves apart from the people involved mean something; (c) that the purpose of the interaction is to get Bill to see things from Smith's point of view.

3. Because of these assumptions, a chain reaction of perception and negative feelings is engendered which blocks communication. By ignoring Bill's feelings and by rationalizing his own, Smith ignores his

relationship to Bill as one of the most important determinants of the communication. As a result, Bill hears Smith's *attitude* more clearly than the logical content of Smith's words. Bill feels that his individual uniqueness is being denied. His personal integrity being at stake, he becomes defensive and belligerent. As a result, Smith feels frustrated. He perceives Bill as stupid. As a result he says and does things which only provoke more defensiveness on the part of Bill.

4. In the case of Jones, I have tried to show what might possibly happen if we made a different evaluation of what is taking place when two people are talking together. Jones makes a different set of assumptions. He assumes (a) that what is taking place between him and Bill is an interaction of sentiments; (b) that Bill—not his words in themselves—means something; (c) that the object of the interaction is to give Bill an opportunity to express freely his differences.

5. Because of these assumptions, a psychological chain reaction of reinforcing feelings and perceptions is set up which facilitates communication between him and Bill. When Jones addresses himself to Bill's feelings and perceptions from Bill's point of view, Bill feels understood and accepted as a person; Bill feels free to express his differences. Bill sees Jones as a source of help; Jones sees Bill as an interesting person. Bill in turn becomes more cooperative.

6. If I have identified correctly these very common patterns of personal communication, then some interesting hypotheses can be stated:

- a. Jones's method works better than Smith's not because of any magic, but because Jones has a better map than Smith of the process of personal communication.
- b. The practice of Jones's method, however, is not merely an intellectual exercise. It depends upon Jones's capacity and willingness to see and accept points of view different from his own, and to practice this orientation in a face-to-face relationship. This practice involves an emotional as well as an intellectual achievement. It depends in part upon Jones's awareness of himself; it depends in part upon the practice of a skill.
- c. Although our colleges and universities try to get students to appreciate intellectually points of view different from their own, very little is done to help them to implement this general intellectual appreciation in a simple face-to-face relationship—at the level of a skill. Most universities train their students to be logical, lucid, and clear. Very little is done to help them to listen more skillfully. As a result, our educated world contains too many Smiths and too few Joneses.
- d. The biggest block to personal communication is man's inability to listen intelligently, understandingly, and skillfully to another person. This deficiency in the modern world is widespread and appalling. In our universities, as well as elsewhere, too little is being done about it.

In conclusion, let me apologize for acting toward you like Smith. But who am I to violate a long-standing academic tradition!



"Operation Abolition"

As this issue of SOCIAL PROGRESS goes to press—March 15—widespread controversy is taking place in churches and communities with respect to the film, *Operation Abolition*. The film, which is a part of an official report of the House Un-American Activities Committee, deals with disturbances by groups of students at the public hearing held by the Committee last May in San Francisco. Over seven hundred prints of the film have been distributed and are being shown by a wide variety of public and private agencies. Charges and countercharges about its truthfulness or distortion have accompanied these showings all across the United States.

Because *Operation Abolition* provides a concrete example of real "conflict within community," the text of a statement adopted February 22, 1961, by the General Board of the National Council of Churches on the film is printed below, followed by a staff commentary.

Statement

The General Board of the National Council of Churches, having viewed the film *Operation Abolition*

1. Deplores the provocation that led to the disturbances, as well as the disturbances themselves, which occurred in connection with the hearings;
2. Reaffirms its opposition to and repugnance for Communism and the activities of Communist sympathizers and warns Christian Americans that in standing for their convictions, they not be confused by Communists or chauvinists;
3. Expresses the conviction that the film does not contribute to a realistic understanding of Communism and its dangers in the United States;
4. Adopts the following statement:

Because there are many serious questions being raised by responsible citizens and organizations concerning the sale and showing of the film *Operation Abolition*, and

because of the effect of charges in the film reflecting adversely upon the reputations of students and upon their efforts to exercise active political concern in the future, and

because of the pressures upon many congregations, ministers, and church groups to show this film, and

because of the effect upon freedom of expression which this film produces by its implication that criticism of the House Committee on Un-American Activities must be Communist-inspired, and

because of Christian concern for truth and justice in all acts of all agencies of government,

The General Board of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. expresses its deep concern about problems raised in the conflicting reports regarding the film *Operation Abolition*.

1. It notes that evidence in the film and statements and articles by responsible newspapers, journals, and journalists and by various eyewitnesses point to the need for answers to such questions as the following:

- a. What evidence, admissible in a court of law, links the Communists and alleged Communists named in the film with the students leading or participating in the demonstration?
 - b. What were the actual incidents of violence, and who were responsible for them?
 - c. What is the degree of responsibility of the students, police, Communists, and the House Committee on Un-American Activities in causing the regrettable incidents recorded in the film?
 - d. What is the legal status of the film subpoenaed by the Committee and now being sold by a private profit-making firm?
 - e. Are there errors of fact and interpretation included in the film as presently distributed?
 - f. What is the responsibility of the House Committee on Un-American Activities, and of the House of Representatives itself, in respect to this film and the charges made in it against students and other citizens?
2. Until objective and convincing answers to these questions are provided by proper authorities not parties at interest in the film and not participants in the events recorded in it, the General Board advises its constituent communions and their members not to exhibit the film *Operation Abolition* in churches unless a full and fair presentation of such facts as are available relevant to these questions is provided beforehand and reference made to the National Council's statement.
3. The General Board authorizes the publication and circulation of *Some Facts and Some Comments* on the responsibility of their respective authors as information helpful in a discussion of the implications of the film *Operation Abolition*. (Ordering address, page 46.)

Commentary

The following is a paraphrased and supplemented version of a report made by the staff of the Department of Religious Liberty of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America:

Descriptive Statements about which there appears to be little disagreement either from those favorably disposed toward the film or those unfavorably disposed toward it:

1. On May 12, 13, and 14, 1960, a subcommittee of the House Committee on Un-American Activities held hearings at the City Hall in San Francisco. The announcement of the scheduled hearings was made eighteen days earlier on April 25. They were announced as "public" hearings.
2. J. Edgar Hoover in his report, *Communist Target—Youth*, page 4, described the setting within which the hearings were held as follows:

"The proposed setting for the hearings placed the (Communist) party in a particularly advantageous position for launching the attack. An HCUA (House Committee on Un-American Activities) inquiry into Communist activities of educators in northern California originally had been scheduled to be held in June, 1959. At that time, widespread opposition to those proposed hearings developed among teachers' groups, church organizations, civil liberties groups, and a few newspapers in the San Francisco area. Student groups to protest the hearings were organized at most of the colleges and universities in the area, including the University of California, Stanford, and City College. The subsequent cancellation of the proposed 1959 hearings left many of these groups and organizations inactive but intact. As a result, when the May 1960 hearings were announced, it required little effort to reactivate these opposition groups . . ."

(Mr. Hoover does not assert or imply in his report that these opposition groups were initially *formed* under Communist influence. But he does imply that they were *reactivated* under that influence.)

3. At least three different groups of people were present in San Francisco while the hearings were going on. The film strongly implies an internal linkage or connection between all three:

Group A—Witnesses, some of whom were known Communists, subpoenaed by the Committee, plus families, friends, relatives, and attorneys of these witnesses inside the hearing room;

Group B—A mass rally sponsored by the Students for Civil Liberties over a mile from the hearings, which later demonstrated *outside* City Hall; and

Group C—Students and others who gathered *inside* City Hall, but *outside* the hearing room, and who wanted admission to the hearing room.

4. Several hundred persons, mostly students (Group C), assembled themselves in line early on the morning of May 12 outside the doors of the hearing room and waited to be admitted when the hearings began.
5. Shortly before the hearings began at 9:30 A.M. on the twelfth, several scores of adults arrived at the hearing room and were admitted by passes distributed at an earlier date by the Committee. Most of the students (in Group C) were not admitted and continued to wait outside the hearing room.
6. At noon on the twelfth, over a mile from City Hall, a mass rally (Group B) sponsored by the Students for Civil Liberties heard two California State Assemblymen and Canon Richard Byfield, of Grace Episcopal Cathedral, make speeches critical of the HCUA. After the rally was concluded, many students marched to City Hall and began to picket outside the building. Students assert they were led and directed by student "monitors," wearing arm bands.
7. On May 13, the second day of the hearing, *before the hearing was reopened*, a group of subpoenaed witnesses (Group A) lined up before live microphones inside the hearing room and, led by Archie Brown, chanted: "Open the door! Open the door!" They proceeded to shout and disrupt the hearing room for several minutes until the Chairman of the (Sub) Committee, Representative Willis, ordered them removed from the room by the police. These scenes form a substantial sequence in the film. It should be noted that they took place *before* the Committee hearing was reopened from its recess. The chanting led by Archie Brown and his cohorts seemed obviously designed to disrupt the proceedings.
8. On the afternoon of the same day, May 13, pass holders were again admitted to the hearing room while the vast majority of the students waiting in the hall outside (Group C) were again left standing. They began to shout, sing, and chant their resentment.
9. On the morning of the third day of the hearing, May 14, many of the same Group C were again gathered outside the hearing room, hoping to be admitted. Again, except for a small number, they were left waiting while pass holders were admitted. They shouted and chanted their resentment again. The Sheriff of San Francisco, Mr. Carberry, talked with them around noon and agreed to talk to the

Committee about having them admitted to the afternoon session on a first-come, first-served basis.

10. Before Sheriff Carberry returned to City Hall from talking with the Committee at lunch, police again admitted adult pass holders and the students again began to shout and chant.
11. Shortly thereafter the police turned fire hoses on the students in an effort to get them to disperse. (It is disputed as to whether or not the hosing was preceded by one student's leaping over a barricade to lead a mass effort to force entrance into the hearing room, although the Hoover report so states.) When the students did not disperse, the police carried or dragged many of them out bodily. Approximately sixty-two students were arrested. Later, charges were dismissed against all of them except one.
12. Several known Communists (Group A) were present at City Hall, having been subpoenaed by the Committee to testify. They tried repeatedly to disrupt the hearings, several were ejected, and some carried signs for a while in the picket line outside City Hall, handed out leaflets, and participated in the shouting and chanting inside.
13. News photographers and radio reporters recorded some of the events inside and outside the hearing room and outside City Hall. "Film footage of the riots in San Francisco taken by TV stations KRON and KPIX . . . and made into a documentary film by Washington Video Productions, Inc., was made part of this report." (House Report No. 2228 of the HCUA.)
14. In an official report of the HCUA to the U.S. Congress, the film is called "The Communist-Led Riots Against the House Committee on Un-American Activities in San Francisco, May 12-14." The thesis of the film is that the demonstrations (or riots) were inspired, organized, and directed by Communist agitators.
15. The film contains no credit lines as to who produced, directed, or distributed it. Over seven hundred prints have been sold for \$100 each to corporations, patriotic groups, veterans organizations, the U.S. Defense Department. Its showing is being promoted by many of these groups in schools, PTA's, churches, defense establishments, community organizations.
16. William Wheeler, Chief HCUA Investigator on the West Coast, admitted publicly that the film contains "distortions and inaccuracies." (E.g., the film shows Harry Bridges as allegedly inciting the demonstrations *before* they took place, when J. Edgar Hoover's report states, page 8, "Order had been restored when Harry Bridges . . . appeared on the scene.") But Chairman Francis Walter of the Committee and others of its staff believe that these faults are small as compared with the importance of the film's over-all message.

17. The film begins by asserting that Communists are distributing leaflets asking for the abolition of the House Committee on Un-American Activities, which is true. The film does not state that many other groups, newspapers, and individuals, completely loyal to the United States and violently opposed to Communism are also opposed to the HCUA. Among the California groups that expressed themselves in opposition to the HCUA are: the Episcopal Diocese of California, the San Francisco Society of Friends, the Northern California Board of Rabbis, the San Francisco Building Trades Council, AFL-CIO, the San Mateo and Santa Clara Counties, American Federation of Teachers, and some seven hundred faculty members of Stanford University, University of California, San Francisco State College, and San Jose State College. It is possible, if not easy, to conclude from the film that anyone who opposes HCUA is either a supporter or a dupe of the Communists.

(Note: Groups seeking to abolish the HCUA seem unable to read the signs of the times clearly. On March 1, 1961, the House of Representatives voted 412-6 in favor of the Committee's expense allotment of \$331,000 for the remainder of 1961.)

18. *Operation Abolition* and/or the means by which the HCUA permitted it to be produced and distributed has been severely criticized by:

- a. Editorials in *The Washington Post*, the Minneapolis Star, the Atlanta Journal, *The New York Post*, *The Christian Century*, and *The Oklahoma Courier* (Diocesan Paper for Oklahoma and Tulsa).
- b. Paul Jacobs in *The Reporter*, Marquis Childs in his syndicated column, Herb Caen in the San Francisco Chronicle, Charles Stein in the San Francisco Examiner, Robert W. Moon in *The Christian Century*, Hadley Roff and Wes Willoughby in the San Francisco Call-Bulletin.

19. Some points to be especially noted:

- a. Not all those who are critical of *Operation Abolition* believe that the HCUA should be abolished. For example, Rev. John M. Joyce, Editor of the Roman Catholic Diocesan Paper for Oklahoma City and Tulsa, in an editorial noted above defended the *intention* of the Committee ("to alert in a dramatic way the citizens of our land to the threat of communistic subversion here at home"), *its right to investigate* subjects over which Congress has no legislative authority, and *its right to continue* in existence. He was, however, extremely critical of the film itself and of the Committee's authorization of the film's production, sale, and distribution.
- b. Very few, if any, of those groups which have raised questions about the film ask that it be *suppressed*. Most of these groups are

opposed to censorship by either governmental or nongovernmental agencies. The statement by the General Board of the National Council of Churches, for example, "advises its constituent communions and their members *not to exhibit the film . . . in churches unless* a full and fair presentation of . . . [the other side] is provided beforehand."

- c. The American Civil Liberties Union, which has itself come under some criticism for defending due process of law in the prosecution of persons accused of unpopular offenses, raises the question of the propriety of the film's being shown at public expense or on public property, as for example in the public schools or in military establishments or by local Civil Defense units.
 - d. *Operation Abolition* carries a powerful emotional impact and, *taken by itself*, will probably convince an objective viewer that the student demonstrations last May in San Francisco *were* Communist-inspired and led. The student groups that participated in the demonstrations have a different story to tell. Their account is heavily biased by their own vested interest in the events and the film. But it is available (as a document entitled *In Search of Truth*) from The Bay Area Student Committee to Abolish the HCUA, 1732 Francisco Street, Berkeley 3, Calif.
20. *Operation Abolition* is explicitly or implicitly defended by:
- a. Most local, regional, or national groups that sponsor its showing.
 - b. J. Edgar Hoover in *Communist Target—Youth*, published by the House Committee on Un-American Activities and available from the United States Government Printing Office, Washington 25, D.C. The report does not mention the film, however.
 - c. House Report No. 2228 of the HCUA, same source.
(Note: Government documents can frequently be obtained also from your U.S. Senator or Representative, Senate or House Office Building, Washington 25, D.C.)
 - d. Extremely conservative—some would say “right-wing”—periodicals such as *The National Review*.
21. As reported on page 41, copies of *Some Facts and Some Comments*, the National Council of Churches 15,000-word report on *Operation Abolition*, are available from the Office of Publication and Distribution, 475 Riverside Drive, New York 27, N.Y., at 50 cents per single copy, discounts on multiple orders. *Much of the above information is taken from a prepublication manuscript of that report.*

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